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President:	Mr. Hunt	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Guegoltin
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunajekh
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Seventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2018/770)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expression of sympathy on the passing away of former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan

The President: As Security Council members will be aware, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan passed away on 18 August. I am sure that Council members will join me in expressing our profound sadness at the news of his death, and in sending condolences to his family and loved ones. As President of the Security Council, I propose that the Council now observe a minute of silence in his honour.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Seventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2018/770)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate; and Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/770, which contains the seventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering that threat.

I now give the floor to Mr. Voronkov.

Mr. Voronkov: On behalf of the Secretary-General, I would like to start by expressing my condolences and solidarity with countries where terror attacks have recently taken place. I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the seventh report (S/2018/770) of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat.

The report was prepared with the input of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, and in close collaboration with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and other United Nations entities and international organizations. As requested by resolutions 2253 (2015) and 2368 (2017), the report contains a strategic-level threat assessment, as well as an update on the United Nations contributions in support of Member States' efforts to counter the threat. The report explains how ISIL continues to present a serious challenge, especially with regard to its transformation into a covert network, the activities of its regional affiliates and the complex threat posed by returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters foreign terrorist fighters and their families. It also elaborates on how Member States and the United Nations continue to strengthen, refine and promote the effective use of tools and measures to address the evolving transnational threat posed by ISIL. Allow me to briefly touch on several key highlights of the report.

First, the report notes that, although the so-called ISIL caliphate has suffered significant losses, it remains a serious and significant concern. Since the end of 2017, ISIL has been defeated in Iraq and is in headlong retreat in the Syrian Arab Republic. Overall, current ISIL membership in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic is estimated at more than 20,000, divided fairly evenly between the two countries. Some ISIL fighters are fully engaged militarily, and others are concealed in sympathetic communities and urban areas. ISIL has also decentralized its leadership structure to mitigate further losses. Therefore, an ISIL core is likely to survive in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic in the

medium term owing to the ongoing conflict and complex stabilization challenges. In addition, significant ISIL-affiliated members also exist in Afghanistan, South-East Asia, West Africa and Libya, and to a lesser extent in Sinai, Yemen, Somalia and the Sahel.

Secondly, the challenge posed by returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters remains complex. The flow of foreign terrorist fighters towards ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic has essentially ended. However, the reverse flow — although slower than anticipated — remains a serious challenge. Moreover, the rising threat from ISIL's global network, particularly from foreign terrorist fighters, will be multidimensional and difficult to predict. For example, the report notes that expertise garnered in conflict areas is one of the dangers posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters — such as with regard to the skills required to prepare improvised explosive devices and weaponize drones.

Thirdly, ISIL's evolution from a proto-State structure into a covert network brings with it new challenges. For instance, ISIL's finances in the Middle East are harder to detect and analyse now that administrative functions to manage finances have gone underground. In the wake of its structural changes, ISIL remains able to channel funds across borders, often via intermediate countries, to their final destinations. Moreover, in considering ISIL's activities in various parts of the world from the Middle East, Africa — particularly North, West and East Africa — to Europe and Central, South and South-East Asia, the report notes ISIL's continuing presence and influence, particularly through its affiliates. ISIL has also continued attempts to expand its presence in Afghanistan, and the terrorist threat extending from Afghanistan into Central Asia is perceived to be increasing. In Indonesia, Jamaah Ansharut Daulah — an ISIL-linked local network of cells — launched a series of deadly suicide bombings in May, while setting the disturbing precedent of using families to launch attacks. In Europe, there are concerns about the high volume of commercially encrypted messages, as well as radicalization in prisons.

The report highlights that Member States and the international community must renew their efforts to effectively counter the rapidly evolving and transnational threat posed by ISIL. It also notes that the role of the Security Council has been instrumental in that regard, especially through the various resolutions it has adopted over the past few years on the various aspects of countering terrorism, as well as on the threat posed by ISIL. The ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions list also remains one of the key global instruments in that effort.

The Secretary-General's seventh report also provides updates on how the United Nations system is strengthening the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of its counter-terrorism efforts in support of Member States. It highlights the work being done by various United Nations entities, in particular the close partnership between my Office — the Office of Counter-Terrorism — and CTED, in cooperation with other entities such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNESCO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN-Women. Together, the United Nations system is striving to address critical aspects, such as countering the financing of terrorism; organized crime; border management and law enforcement; international judicial cooperation; prosecution; rehabilitation and reintegration; and countering terrorist narratives and engaging communities. In particular, United Nations counter-terrorism bodies have continued to focus on the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters.

The United Nations capacity-building implementation plan for countering the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, steered by the Office of Counter-Terrorism and CTED, has been updated and streamlined to reflect the priorities identified in resolution 2396 (2017). It now consists of 40 projects to be implemented by 12 United Nations entities. More than 20 of the 40 projects focus specifically on returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters. To counter the threat posed by ISIL and terrorism more broadly, international cooperation, information-sharing and capacity-building are critical. Moreover, the increasing sophistication of methods used by terrorists requires counter-measures, particularly technological ones that are commensurately complex and advanced. All those topics were discussed by Member States at the United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held this past June at the initiative of Secretary-General Guterres.

The Secretary-General remains firmly committed to supporting Member States in the fight against terrorism, including ISIL and its affiliates. In particular, he welcomes the Security Council's continued attention to the matter, as it is only through a sustained and

concerted multilateral response that we can address the scourge of terrorism.

As discussed with the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom in its capacity as President of the Security Council, I also avail myself of this opportunity to brief the Council on my visit to Afghanistan last week.

I travelled to Kabul from 14 to 15 August to participate in a conference organized by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. The Government of Afghanistan played a leading role in establishing the annual International Day of Remembrance on 21 August, through General Assembly resolution 72/165. In my keynote speech at the conference, I emphasized the need for solidarity with victims of terrorism in Afghanistan and around the world. I reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to listen to the victims of terrorism, respect their rights and provide them with support and justice. I also met with a large group of victims from across Afghanistan, who told me about the devastating impact of terrorism on their lives. They asked simple questions, which, however, were difficult to answer. For example: despite the preventive measures taken by the international community, why are terrorists still able to collect money, arms and ammunition and find new support that enables them to continue their horrible acts? We must look into that and other critical questions and meet the expectations of victims.

I am grateful that many Council members were able to join the Secretary-General and me last Friday at the launch of an exhibition to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. We must never forget the tens of thousands of people who have been injured, traumatized or lost their lives during terrorist attacks. Sixty-four thousand people were killed or injured in Afghanistant over the past nine years.

During my mission to Kabul, I also had an opportunity to hold high-level consultations with President Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah, Foreign Minister Rabbani and other Cabinet members and senior officials of the Government of Afghanistan responsible for countering terrorism. They told me that counter-terrorism efforts should be considered in the context of Afghanistan's peace and reconciliation process, while taking a long-term and regional perspective. They also indicated that they are strongly in favour of the peace process. To that end, they all proposed organizing a high-level conference in Kabul next year, with the support of the United Nations and regional and international partners, to develop a regional counter-terrorism strategy with a focus on Afghanistan. I shared that idea with the Ambassadors of the permanent members of the Security Council and Central Asian Ambassadors, as well as with the Deputy Commander of NATO's Resolute Support Mission during my meetings with them in Kabul. Of course, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Yamamoto are involved in those discussions. They all expressed initial interest with regard to the idea of a conference.

The Government of Afghanistan also discussed its counter-terrorism priorities, including addressing the evolving threat from foreign terrorist fighters, border management and aviation security, the prevention of violent extremism and the links between terrorism and organized crime. I will consult further with UNAMA, the Department of Political Affairs, CTED and other United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities to discuss how best to support Afghan counter-terrorism efforts. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism looks forward to continuing to work closely with the Security Council, the Government of Afghanistan and other key regional and international partners to ensure a safe and secure future for the people of Afghanistan.

The President: I thank Mr. Voronkov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Coninsx.

Ms. Coninsx: I thank members for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the seventh report (S/2018/770) of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat. I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov for providing an overview of the report, and his team for its collaboration in preparing it, on the basis of input from the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

As we have already heard, there can be no doubt that the threat from ISIL continues to evolve and

pose significant challenges to all actors involved in countering it. Such challenges derive in particular from, first, the ongoing transformation of ISIL into a global covert network; secondly, the activities of its regional affiliates throughout the world; and, thirdly, the potential threat posed by returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters.

Approximately eight months have passed since the Council's adoption of resolution 2396 (2017), on the issue of returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters. In my briefing today I wish to highlight three key challenges associated with that threat. Since the adoption of the first resolution on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters — resolution 2178 (2014), which focused on preventing fighters from travelling to conflict zones — the emphasis has shifted to fighters who relocate or who return to their countries of origin, nationality or to third countries. In CTED's engagement with Member States, we have identified the following trends in that regard.

First, although the number of returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters is thus far not as high as some had feared, their unique situation nonetheless poses a range of challenges to Member States. States have experienced difficulties in conducting comprehensive risk assessments of foreign terrorist fighter returnees and their accompanying family members, as requested by resolution 2396 (2017). The prosecution of returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters also faces various evidentiary and jurisdictional challenges. In some cases, a revision of the existing legal framework is required. Prosecutors and investigators require specialized knowledge, including in the use of special investigative techniques that rely on modern technologies. They must often rely on evidence gathered by the military, or on digital evidence located on foreign servers. Strengthening judicial cooperation and mutual legal assistance therefore remains vital. States must also develop tailored prosecution strategies for returning and relocating men, women and children. Although Member States have developed a range of rehabilitation and reintegration strategies and programmes, there is limited knowledge as to their effectiveness and impact.

Secondly, a significant number of foreign terrorist fighters have already entered the criminal-justice systems of some States, which places new demands on prisons and raises increasing concerns about the potential for in-prison radicalization. More work is needed to address issues such as prison capacity and security, the conditions of, and treatment in, detention, the specific needs and risks associated with violent extremist prisoners and the development of non-custodial alternatives.

I would also like to draw the Council's attention to a third trend identified by CTED in its engagement with Member States. That new trend concerns the potential risks posed by the forthcoming release of imprisoned foreign terrorist fighters. States are increasingly concerned about the potential for some of those released fighters to re-engage in terrorist activities and radicalization to violence. Many States are uncertain about the effectiveness of risk-assessment and monitoring tools developed for such individuals, whether during their imprisonment or following their release. A number of foreign terrorist fighters have been given relatively short sentences, for various reasons, including, in some cases, lack of evidence of their involvement in terrorist activity in conflict zones. In such cases, Member States may have limited opportunities to engage at-risk individuals in rehabilitation and reintegration programmes prior to their release.

There is therefore the need to strengthen data-collection and information-sharing in that area, including on lessons learned, in order to ensure that rehabilitation and reintegration programmes are based on sound methodologies and implemented in full compliance with domestic law and international human rights law. CTED will continue to support Member States in their efforts to identify relevant good practices in that area.

Foreign terrorist fighters are only one threat emanating from ISIL and its associates. The complex and evolving threat posed by terrorism requires us to remain ever-vigilant and alert. In our country assessment visits on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, we continue to highlight the importance of effective implementation by Member States of the relevant Council resolutions, including resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017). Over the past six months, Member States and United Nations entities have continued to develop innovative ways to address the threat. Allow me to highlight just a few.

We continue to support Member States in the use of the most up-to-date technologies to secure their borders. Resolution 2396 (2017) introduced several

new requirements in that regard, including the use of advance passenger information and passenger name record systems, as well as biometrics. We shall continue to assist States to ensure that those technologies are used effectively and responsively, in full compliance with international law, including human rights law, and with due regard to privacy and data-protection concerns.

One important milestone in that regard was the recent publication of the United Nations Compendium of Recommended Practices for the Responsible Use and Sharing of Biometrics in Counter-Terrorism. Another was the recent publication, pursuant to resolution 2396 (2017), of the Compendium of Good Practices on the Protection of Critical Infrastructure against Terrorist Attacks.

We also continue to forge new and innovative partnerships with the private sector, particularly in the area of information and communications technologies. We are cooperating with not only some of the big names in the industry, but also small enterprises and start-ups. That engagement is essential — for example, with respect to gathering digital evidence in terrorism cases. CTED, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Association of Prosecutors are developing guidance for requesting and gathering electronic evidence across borders, including from private communications service providers, and will publish a practical guide for Member States in September.

The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Working Group on Legal and Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism is also finalizing United Nations guidelines to facilitate the use and admissibility of information and evidence collected, preserved and shared by the military.

I wish to stress that our continued engagement with civil society, including women's groups, is essential to ensuring a holistic, whole-of-society approach to countering terrorism and violent extremism. Our dialogue with the research community, particularly through CTED's Global Counter-Terrorism Research Network, continues to provide new insights and contributes to our analysis of the latest trends and developments.

The global fight against ISIL and its affiliates continues. The United Nations system, including CTED and the Office of Counter-Terrorism, continues to strengthen its coordination and coherence in order to assess implementation gaps, identify good practices and deliver the necessary technical assistance to Member States. Our unity and joint efforts are as vital now as ever before.

The President: I thank Ms. Coninsx for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Cook.

Ms. Cook: I thank the Security Council for inviting me here today to discuss the report I recently co-authored with Gina Vale. It is an honour for me to present our research on the strategic, tactical and operational engagement of women and minors by Da'esh, an issue which we believe requires immediate and urgent attention. While this is a critical concern related to Da'esh in particular, it is also increasingly reflected in other jihadist groups today.

Our research has demonstrated the scale of this concern. For the first time, we are able to demonstrate with evidence that across 80 countries and of the estimated 41,490 foreign citizens that became affiliated with Da'esh, 13 per cent are women and 12 per cent are minors. That includes at least 730 infants born in-theatre to foreign parents. Women and minors therefore represent one in four recorded foreigners to become affiliated with Da'esh. These figures are unprecedented for a terrorist organization, and also serve to emphasize the need to consider the broader networks of persons affiliated with such groups beyond only fighters.

We believe this to be a vast underestimation, based on current gaps in data. Of the 80 countries reviewed only 26 provide publicly reliable figures for both women and minors. We therefore still do not have a full understanding of the scale and scope of this concern. Thos statistics also exclude those who were prevented from traveling to Iraq and Syria and local women and minors within the conflict zone who may have become affiliated with Da'esh —whether willingly or coercively. Women and minors are vastly underestimated and underanalysed groups. As such, they risk being neglected in all assessments and full-spectrum responses related to Da'esh.

Why were so many women drawn to Da'esh? By presenting itself as an ideologically pure, State-building project and holding and administering territory between 2014 up to late 2017, it gave women an opportunity, a perceived stake and sense of purpose in building that proto-State. It drew persons as diverse as schoolgirls

to grandmothers from five continents. Those women expressed feelings of discrimination, oppression and disenfranchisement in the communities they left behind, and believed Da'esh offered them something meaningful through roles ranging from citizens, mothers and wives, to public sector workers. Women within that territory and abroad also sought and carried out more nefarious roles and acted as police, recruiters, fundraisers and disseminators of propaganda, mobilizing both men and women for Da'esh.

Da'esh achieved the support of women through targeted, gendered recruitment efforts in its multilingual propaganda, which utilized language and imagery that emphasized women's rights, empowerment and a sense of purpose and belonging offered by their caliphate. It also exploited their personal and political grievances, framed their participation as a religious obligation and promised services ranging from free health care and education to marriage arrangements, among others.

The factors that pushed individuals out of their societies and pulled them towards Da'esh and its ideology are diverse, complex and have to be understood and assessed on an individual basis. We also recognize that levels of agency and motivation differed for each person. Some women were ideologically committed and actively sought to support Da'esh, travelling independently or with their children or families, while others were subject to varying levels of coercion.

Da'esh also sought to promote the recruitment of minors within and beyond its physical territory, raising its "cubs" as the future fighters and ideological guardians of its caliphate project. The group's propaganda has displayed systematic indoctrination of boys and girls throughout its education system. For boys in particular, enrolment in military training camps was mandatory, with the aim to psychologically and physically recondition young recruits to fight and engage in violence. Through such efforts, Da'esh has sought to project an image of strength, bolster its fighting force and even weaponize minors.

Similar to women, minors are not a homogeneous group. They experienced diverse recruitment pathways into Da'esh and held varied roles. Those roles range from passive citizens of the so-called caliphate and child brides, to spies, combatants and executioners. We therefore recommend three sub-categories of Da'esh-affiliated minors in line with gender and age considerations as an indicator of the various levels of individual agency and, therefore, accountability. These categories are infants under 4 years of age, many of whom were likely born inside Da'esh territory; children aged 5 to 14, who mostly appeared to be taken by their parents or guardians; and teenagers from ages 15 to 17, some of whom travelled independently.

The physical fall of the so-caliphate represented a significant turning point for the group. However, we do not believe this to be the end of its relevance or activities, only a period of evolution, and therefore a particularly important time to assess the current and future status of its affiliates, including women and minors. An estimated 7,366 Da'esh affiliates, or 20 per cent, have now returned to their countries of departure, or appear to be in repatriation processes to do so. However, only 256, or 4 per cent, of total returnees are recorded as women. In contrast, up to 1,180 — 17 per cent — of total returnees are recorded as minors, suggesting that some Member States have prioritized the repatriation of minors.

The current status of the significant number of women and minors beyond returnees also requires immediate attention and clarification. We have identified women and minors as detainees in Iraq and Syria, in internally displaced persons camps, as persons still associated with Da'esh in Iraq and Syria, as those in third-party countries, and some who have been killed. More concerning perhaps are the vast numbers whose status remains unknown. We also highlight important concerns related to the status of orphaned and stateless minors, whose only identity may have been one affiliated with Da'esh and who require particularly targeted and tailored interventions.

We believe that women are poised to play an important role in carrying forward the ideology and legacy of Da'esh. That view is based on a number of considerations, including the motivation of some to pass on that ideology to their children, the nefarious and support roles they held in Da'esh, shifting discourses related to women's roles within the group, and the combat training some women received under Da'esh. Numerous attacks — both successful and foiled — have served to demonstrate the security risk some women can pose.

Minors have likely been largely traumatized by the Da'esh violence they witnessed and, in some cases, actively conducted. There is evidence that male-child and teenage "cubs" have already been engaged in

suicide attacks beyond Da'esh's immediate territory, and the group's propaganda continues to call for, and inspire its soldiers of all ages to conduct, guided and independent attacks overseas. However, we also recognize that many women and minors are unlikely to become security threats, and may instead seek to disengage from the group and its ideology. Our research has reaffirmed the critical importance of integrating considerations related to gender and age in assessing the range of threats posed by Da'esh and its affiliates, while ensuring that is reflected in common vulnerabilities and exposures, and military, criminal justice, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

This moment presents both exceptional challenges for us as an international community as well an opportunity. We now have an evidence base that recognizes that women and minors, as two distinct and nuanced groups, must be accounted for in our understanding of contemporary terrorist and violent extremist groups. Only by having a stronger evidence base, both qualitatively and quantitatively, will we be able to develop more effective, holistic and sustainable responses.

The President: I thank Ms. Cook for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Voronkov and Ms. Coninsx for their briefings on the report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security (S/2018/770). We would also like to welcome Ms. Joana Cook and thank her for sharing the key findings of her report on Da'esh women and minors, which shows the value of inviting civil society and researchers to inform our discussions.

In the summer of 2014, Da'esh swept down the Tigris and Euphrates valleys, capturing thousands of square miles of Iraq and Syria and imposing its pitiless rule on millions of people in an area that was once the cradle of civilization. Over the next three years, attacks that were directed, inspired or enabled by Da'esh would claim more than 30,000 lives, including 181 attacks outside Iraq and Syria. The world responded by forming a global coalition to defeat this threat, and military action by many countries, including my own, has driven Da'esh from almost all of its domain and liberated millions from its oppression. But the point I wish to emphasize today is that Da'esh has not been vanquished, and that the root causes of its emergence have yet to be resolved.

Britain shares the assessment of the Secretary-General's report that Da'esh is responding to the loss of territory by evolving into a covert terrorist network, with branches as far apart as Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen. Da'esh takes advantage of ungoverned space and weak States. Its terrorists do not necessarily require central direction, and they have demonstrated their ability to strike in Europe and South-East Asia.

The report of the Secretary-General estimates that as many as 20,000 Da'esh fighters remain in Syria and Iraq, among them citizens of many countries. Around 900 people with links to the United Kingdom have travelled to join the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Around 40 per cent returned to the United Kingdom in the early days Da'esh's so-called caliphate, and some 20 per cent are believed dead. The rest are still in Iraq, Syria or elsewhere. Our response to this enduring threat should fall into two parts.

First, we must press on with military operations against Da'esh. British forces continue to play their part as members of the global coalition, and the United Kingdom leads in the vital area of strategic communications against Da'esh. This year the British Government has committed another £20 million to counter-terrorism projects in countries we assess to be most at risk from returning foreign fighters.

Secondly, we should renew our focus on prevention by addressing the root causes of the emergence of Da'esh, which means doing more to support peace and reconciliation in Iraq and a lasting political settlement in Syria. It also means responding to specific humanitarian problems. For example, up to 20 per cent of foreign fighters globally are women and girls. Almost 10 per cent of the 40,000 individuals who travelled to join Da'esh were minors, many of whom have witnessed or experienced horrific violence and been exposed to radicalization. Some will be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. We need to act to prevent those minors from becoming the next generation of terrorists.

The United Nations has a vital role to play in the struggle against Da'esh, consistent with the responsibility of the Security Council to address threats to international peace and security. The Council made air travel more secure by adopting resolution 2309

(2016), the first-ever resolution on aviation security, and it addressed the threat from foreign fighters in resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017). Earlier, in 2005, the Council adopted resolution 1624 (2005), condemning incitement and repudiating all attempts to justify or glorify acts of terrorism. The Council should be willing to consider further action in order to counter the use of the Internet by terrorists for propaganda and fundraising.

Prevention is a key pillar of the United Kingdom's approach to counter-terrorism. Our aim is to identify anyone at risk of radicalization. We seek to reintegrate them into society. Agencies and local Governments, from health, education, social services and the police, routinely meet to identify individuals at risk and refer them to programmes run by specialists in deradicalization. That approach, which focuses on prevention rather than prosecution after a crime has been committed, has caused more than 500 people to turn away from terrorism in the United Kingdom. We have learned lessons over the years and refined our "prevent" programme. We stand ready to share our experiences with countries that face similar problems.

Societies that are confident in their beliefs and values and hold Governments to account are societies that are resistent to the virus of terrorism. The key to success is partnership among many nations. We must not lose sight of the importance of those partnerships, even as Da'esh loses its grip on Syria and Iraq. I look forward to our discussion today on how we can act together to prevent and counter the evolving threat from Da'esh.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. Foreign Secretary, for coming to preside over this very important briefing. Welcome you to New York.

The United States is grateful for the United Kingdom's unwavering commitment to the fight against terrorism. It is a vital member of the global coalition to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), and we appreciate its continued leadership on the issue. We also thank our briefers.

Just three years ago, ISIS was on a rampage. These terrorists seized Iraq's second-largest city and threatened the capital. In northern Syria, ISIS used its safe haven to plan attacks and radicalize new recruits. It was a threat that no civilized nation could ignore. The United States stepped up to face that challenge. We did not face it alone. We rallied a global coalition to defeat ISIS — a partnership of like-minded States and organizations to confront that evil. Our ranks grew, and that global coalition now totals an incredible 77 members.

Together, we have made significant progress. Iraq was able to declare its territory liberated from ISIS. The coalition has driven ISIS out of much of its former territory and Syria. However, the fight is not over. A committed core of ISIS fighters remains in Iraq and Syria. They are a resilient enemy, and so we must remain vigilant. After coming so far, we do not want to give ISIS room to regroup. Our hard work will continue to make sure that ISIS faces an enduring defeat. That is why we work with our partners to help the victims to rebuild. In Iraq and Syria, our coalition partners have been clearing rubble, defusing mines and restoring electricity and other services. That has allowed 150,000 Syrians to return to what used to be the ISIS capital, Raqqa, since the city was liberated. That work will continue for some time thanks to the generous contributors of approximately $300 million in new stabilizing funds.

We welcome the leadership of those partners in stepping up to address such challenges. Our shared contributions show the enduring strength of that global coalition. However, sadly, defeating ISIS in Iraq and Syria will not be the end of the story. As we have heard, the hateful ideology of ISIS has taken root in new corners of the world — places such as Afghanistan, Nigeria, Libya, Somalia and the Sinai. The lesson in that regard is that ISIS is an enemy that adapts and one that will seek out the world's ungoverned spaces. We must deny ISIS a safe haven. In many of those places that means putting real pressure on parties to end conflicts that have dragged on for years. We need to focus on building up State authority and extending the reach of institutions so that ISIS does not have the breathing room to expand and to plot new attacks.

We also cannot forget the enduring threat posed by Al-Qaida. ISIS may have captured more headlines in recent years but the leaders of Al-Qaida are still plotting attacks around the world. That includes a large remaining Al-Qaida presence in Syria, Yemen and other parts of the world. The future of our fight against terrorism will look different than the challenges that came before. Our enemies no longer control large

pieces of territory, spanning multiple countries. They hide in the shadows or in places where Governments hide them or look the other way. Such terrorists never cease to look for new opportunities, and so we cannot let down our guard.

We know the tools that will be critical to that fight. The United States led the way in negotiating resolution 2396 (2017), which sets the highest standards for States to disrupt the travel of foreign terrorist fighters. Every Member State must implement that resolution in full in order to break up the routes that terrorists use to get from one battlefield to another. That means making sure that Member States use and share the latest technology, such as passenger name records, watchlists and biometrics, in order to identify threats trying to cross our borders. Screening all travellers with those tools is an essential step.

Member States need to come up with strategies to address fighters who may try to return to their homes. As one of our briefers mentioned today, it is not only men, but also women and children, who may have tried to join terrorist groups. Under resolution 2396 (2017), every Government must focus on a comprehensive plan to prosecute, rehabilitate and reintegrate foreign terrorist fighters and their families.

We must also make full use of our sanctions regimes so as to deny funding to terrorist groups and the entities that continue to support them. Where force is necessary, the United States will deepen its long-standing partnerships with countries fighting terrorism. Above all, we will never hesitate to act to protect the American people from the threat of terrorism.

Today, while we look back at the campaign against ISIS, we must prepare for tomorrow's challenges. We must maintain our resolve, and we will prevail. There is no doubt about how the story will end. The forces of terror will never win. The fight against terror will take different forms, but the outcome is certain. The United States will continue to be a force in the effort against ISIS and Al-Qa'ida until we defeat the threat.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a true pleasure to have you, Sir, preside over this Security Council meeting.

My delegation is grateful for the briefings today by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, and by Ms. Michele Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, to whom we reiterate our greatest support for their important work. We also appreciate the informative presentation by Ms. Joana Cook of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation.

The threat posed by terrorism and extremism has surpassed local and regional dimensions to become a global problem that represents one of the greatest challenges facing the international community today, particularly because terrorist groups and organizations have developed capacities to coordinate their criminal acts through various platforms, including digital ones, as well as to recruit people remotely using different means and narratives.

In light of that, it is necessary to reiterate that terrorism cannot, and should not, be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. Such characteristics should not be used to justify for any reason measures to combat or to prevent terrorism.

As has been noted, a clear example of the threat represented by terrorism can be seen in foreign terrorist fighters, whose return to their countries of origin and their movement across areas of conflict are a source of concern that calls for greater action on the part of States. The fact that since 2011 more than 30,000 combatants from approximately 100 countries have travelled primarily to Syria and Iraq demonstrates the magnitude of the problem, all the more so given the increasing victories in eliminating Da'esh.

It is important to bear in mind that foreign terrorist fighters did not emerge suddenly or spontaneously. Rather, they are the product of a process of ideological radicalization and, once on the ground, of military training in handling weapons and explosive devices, including improvised explosive devices, which, according to the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/770), and as Ms. Cook noted, has even involved entire families, including women and children. It is therefore necessary to realize that the most influential factors in recruiting people are linked to their socioeconomic situation and their vulnerability when presented with promises of material and personal benefits, as well as claims of ideological or sectarian beliefs. That must of course go hand in hand with an analysis and assessment of the structural causes of the rise of terrorism, which include regime-change policies and interventionism.

The fight against and the prevention of terrorism must also focus on implementing measures of development, inclusion and dialogue, as established by pillars I and II of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Similarly, the implementation of resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017), which propose parameters to deal with the problem of foreign terrorist fighters, take on particular importance when drafting strategies and taking decisions.

In addition, the link between terrorist groups and transnational criminal organizations associated with crimes such as people smuggling, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of weapons, ammunition, oil, its by-products and cultural and heritage assets is increasingly evident, since by perpetrating such crimes those organizations gather economic resources and legitimize them through money-laundering and other mechanisms that seek to undermine or to eliminate State control. We must identify these networks and payment mechanisms so as to take concrete actions to eliminate the capacity of these criminal and terrorist organizations to avail themselves of economic and financial resources. It is also crucial that the international community focus its efforts on investigating whether terrorist groups have access to tax havens and to take joint actions to eliminate them.

We must also strengthen States' capacities to fight decisively against money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. To that end, the cooperation, joint work and assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate are, of course, of paramount importance.

In that light, we reiterate that all of the efforts deployed by the Security Council and our Organization to counter terrorism must enjoy the greatest possible support and participation of Member States and aim to strengthen the capacity of States both in the domain of prevention and in counter-terrorism efforts, in full respect of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States. Likewise, accountability before the law is vital so that those responsible for committing such criminal acts are duly investigated, prosecuted and punished with the greatest severity, pursuant to international law.

In that regard, my delegation once again expresses its strong support for the transparent and balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its four pillars. We call on the entire international community to act decisively in the struggle against this scourge, using all the means provided by the Charter of the United Nations to fulfil the commitments undertaken in the framework of international law and the resolutions of the Security Council.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, wish to thank Mr. Voronkov for his informative briefing on the seventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh (S/2018/770). I thank also Ms. Coninsx and Ms. Cook for their very enlightening briefings. I wish specifically to commend the outstanding work done by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation through its report on the return of women and minors affiliated with Da'esh.

The report of the Secretary-General underscores the fact that despite the loss of its territorial foothold, Da'esh continues to pose a grave threat, both locally and globally. Its transformation into a global underground network, the widespread network of foreign terrorist fighters and the appeal of terrorist propaganda only make the threat more resilient. In the face of an enemy that is endlessly adapting, our responses, too, must evolve.

I wish therefore to stress four areas where France believes that our efforts can and must be scaled up.

I turn first to the operations of the international coalition against Da'esh. These must continue so as to see through to completion the struggle against the terrorist organization in Iraq and Syria following the decisive victories over that group, which has lost virtually all of its territory. In order to prevent its resurgence, our military actions are complemented by efforts on the civilian front aimed at a lasting stabilization of the areas liberated from Da'esh and at reconstruction where possible, such as in Iraq, in keeping with the pledges made at the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, held in February. It is important that all stakeholders and the United Nations system remain mobilized and that their efforts be translated into tangible progress for the peoples concerned.

We must also eradicate the root causes of terrorism through the implementation of pluralist and inclusive political solutions in Syria and Iraq that meet the deep-seated and legitimate concerns of the people. Putting an end to impunity for the crimes perpetrated by Da'esh in the Levant is vital to rebuilding inclusive and peaceful

societies. I am specifically thinking here of the grave violations perpetrated by Da'esh against children and of the sexual violence against and the enslavement of more than 6,000 Yazidis. In that vein, France reiterates its full support for the independent international investigative mechanisms established by the United Nations to shed light on the serious crimes committed in Syria and Iraq and call on all States Members of the United Nations and the system as a whole to work hand in hand to that end.

The second area where we need to redouble our efforts is the struggle against the financing of terrorism, which is a top priority for France. Although the loss of territory has significantly reduced Da'esh's revenues, the group has devised increasingly sophisticated adaptation strategies. Our legal and operational frameworks must therefore also be consistently adapted and strengthened so as to enhance the transparency of financial flows, the sharing of information and cooperation with the private sector.

To that end, last April France organized an international conference on combating financing for Da'esh and Al-Qaida that brought together 70 States and some 20 international organizations. It culminated in the adoption of the Paris Agenda, which represents an effective road map for stepping up our commitment, and we call for the implementation of the commitments undertaken within that framework.

Thirdly, we must continue our efforts to counter Internet use by terrorist groups. A significant amount of progress has been achieved and Internet companies have mobilized, but a great deal remains to be done, as demonstrated by the broadcasting of a nearly one-hour statement by Omar Al-Baghdadi on Telegram on 22 August. We will continue our efforts, including at the European level, to more effectively obstruct the dissemination of terrorist propaganda, which fuels radicalization, and the use of the Internet for the financing of terrorism.

Finally, the relocation and return of foreign terrorist fighters remains a more pervasive threat that our countries must address. In the face of this challenge, whose complexity was eloquently described by Ms. Coninsx, we must step up our efforts to track, monitor and follow up individuals who pose a risk through the consistent sharing of information. In the light of the diversity of the profiles concerned, close cooperation between military, civilian and financial intelligence services and agencies and with the judicial authorities is vital to strengthen the nexus between intelligence and the actions of criminal justice.

Education, social services and justice are vital to assist families. Through our national mechanism, France emphasizes specifically caring for children at the social, psychological and educational levels, in order to facilitate their integration. We will therefore host in Paris next September a regional meeting organized by the Office of Counter-Terrorism on dealing, with full respect for human rights, with children who accompany foreign terrorist fighters.

I wish to stress the unifying role that the United Nations must continue to play in the fight against terrorism, specifically in areas where Da'esh has established a presence or that it has infiltrated. France will continue to provide support to United Nations bodies in their efforts to identify needs and the responses required as well as in the promotion of coordination among all concerned stakeholders in the wake of the United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held here in late June.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): Mr. President, let me start by thanking you for having come to the Security Council. It is a true honour to have you personally presiding over our meeting today. Allow me also to take this opportunity to thank you and your great team here in New York for a very effective and efficient presidency of the Council.

Turning to today's discussion, I would like to thank Mr. Voronkov, Ms. Coninsx and Ms. Cook for their briefings.

In my intervention, I will focus on three issues: first, the threat of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and our response; secondly, the role of women and children; and, thirdly, accountability.

First, on the threat and our response, we just heard that the threat posed by ISIS has changed but certainly not diminished. This calls for a coherent international response. As ISIS changes into a covert network, we have to invest in financial intelligence and in public-private partnerships to counter its financing.

As ISIS strengthens its affiliates around the world, we have to focus on prevention and on the resilience of local communities. And as ISIS fighters return and relocate, we have to detect and counter the travel

movements of terrorists through passenger name record systems. We must strengthen international cooperation in this field.

Terrorism continues to warrant our utmost attention. We cannot give in to counter-terrorism fatigue. We have to invest in international cooperation.

My second point focuses on the role of women and children. The briefing by Ms. Cook today served to underscore the importance of civil society involvement for preventing and countering violent extremism. We need a whole-of-society approach, and women and youngsters are key in that regard. At the same time, as Ms. Cook pointed out, we must acknowledge that women with ISIS may also be perpetrators of terrorist acts, while minors with ISIS are first and foremost victims, but may also pose a threat. Dealing with women and minors with ISIS therefore requires a case-by-case approach that integrates prevention, prosecution and rehabilitation.

With that in mind, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United States work very closely together in the framework of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). Together we have collected good practices to address the challenges of returning families of foreign terrorist fighters. Those good practices have led to practical guidelines, which will be endorsed at the GCTF ministerial meeting on 26 September here in New York. As Council members may be aware, the GCTF is co-chaired by Morocco and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We will make sure that those guidelines are made available to all Member States.

That brings me to my third point: accountability. We need to ensure that impunity for terrorism will not prevail. One of our key priorities in the Council is accountability. The Kingdom of the Netherlands favours the establishment of a specialized court for international crimes, as proposed by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. We also continue to support efforts by the Investigative Team in Iraq and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) for Syria to collect evidence against ISIS fighters. We look forward to the Council's first briefing, in December, by the Special Adviser of the Investigative Team, and call on all Member States to cooperate with and support the Independent Mechanism. We must unite in holding ISIS fighters accountable for their heinous acts, in particular war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

In conclusion, last Friday here at the United Nations we remembered and paid tribute to the victims of terrorism. We heard impactful statements from the Secretary-General and Mr. Voronkov. But we also heard the personal stories of the families of victims of terrorism and of survivors of attacks. We felt the real-life sorrow behind our discussion today. If we need any further motivation to transform our words into deeds, let it be the brave voices of the victims and survivors of terrorist acts who spoke here at the United Nations: they are counting on us, and we owe it to them.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome your presence here today, Sir, thank you for convening this meeting and commend the excellent work of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations in conducting its presidency of the Council this month. We also thank Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Ms. Michele Coninsx and Ms. Joana Cook for their briefings.

We note with concern that the so-called Islamic State, although weakened, nonetheless continues to become a covert global organization with a strong presence in Iraq and Syria and, through affiliated organizations, other areas of the Middle East and Asia as well as on the continent of Africa. In that context, we would like to highlight the focus the United Nations has placed on the counter-terrorism agenda over the past six months, as reflected in both the sixth Biennial Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the successful holding of the first High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, in late June.

Despite the military setbacks the international community has inflicted on Da'esh, the terrorist organization is seeking to maintain its influence by using the Internet and social networks to instigate, mobilize and direct its followers to perpetrate attacks in their countries of origin as well as to raise funds and attract new followers. I underscore the need to continue strengthening policies aimed at counteracting such manifestations of global terrorism. That includes promoting the development of critical thinking in the digital realm among the target audiences for such propaganda, especially young people.

Moreover, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/770), the return or relocation of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as the growing number of "frustrated travelers", also represent significant

threats, albeit to a lesser extent than anticipated. We therefore underscore the need to pursue comprehensive criminal justice strategies that incorporate full respect for human rights and due process. Such strategies must also take gender into account and integrate an approach aimed at safeguarding the rights of children, especially when it comes to the families of returning or relocating fighters.

I must draw particular attention to the role of prisons when foreign terrorist fighters enter national criminal justice systems: it is essential to ensure that prisons do not serve as venues for further radicalization and recruitment.

Da'esh financing is further cause for particular concern, especially as the organization operates in a covert manner and no longer tries to administer larger territories, although it maintains some sources of income from oil wells in eastern Syria, forced expropriations and kidnappings. Against that backdrop, it is crucial for Member States to bear in mind that, in addition to strengthening financial intelligence systems, it is important to take measures to monitor cash used by terrorists.

In connection with this problem, we must draw attention to the increasingly clear links between transnational organized crime and terrorist organizations — a reality reflected in the report, especially the links between terrorist financing and money laundering, as well as other sources, including trafficking in people, drugs and weapons. In that regard, we deem it essential to gain a deeper understanding of these dynamics, as stressed in the Security Council presidential statement of 8 May 2018 (S/PRST/2018/9).

We reiterate that the crimes must not go unpunished. We must ensure accountability. To do so, the collection of evidence in conflict zones and of digital evidence represent a principal challenge. We therefore welcome the progress made by the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, as well as the operationalization of the Investigative Team into crimes committed in Iraq.

We also welcome the appointment of the Ombudsperson to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, which will allow that important subsidiary body to function in accordance with rules guaranteeing due process.

Our Organization, and the Security Council in particular, has a fundamental role to play in tackling terrorist threats, fostering cooperation among all Member States and among regional and subregional organizations, and it can count on the fullest commitment of my delegation in that regard.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate; and Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, for their valuable briefings on the threats that Da'esh poses to international peace and security.

I would like to focus in my statement on three main issues: first, the threat posed by Da'esh; secondly, technology and terrorist groups; and, thirdly, the desired international cooperation.

First, with regard to the threat posed by Da'esh, despite the fact that it is diminishing in Iraq and Syria, Da'esh is still capable of threatening regional peace and security. It is estimated at having 20,000 combatants today, who are able to quickly adapt to the conditions in which they operate. It has transformed from a regional entity into a covert network, which is difficult to track and whose financial resources difficult to trace. The phenomenon of returning and relocating terrorist fighters and their families poses a threat to their own countries as well as to third countries, given the field military expertise they have acquired. That requires that we all adopt a comprehensive and collective approach by taking precautionary measures to address the phenomenon, including through exchanging information on the matter. In that regard, we commend the support that the United Nations is offering to Member States in the area of capacity-building for counter-terrorism.

Secondly, with respect to technology and terrorist groups, social networking continues to constitute an important resource for terrorist groups to spread their radical ideologies. That requires us to enhance international efforts to cooperate on adopting measures to prevent and fight those groups that exploit technology and communications. In that regard, we commend

the initiatives launched by the United Nations within the framework of enhanced cooperation with small technology companies and Governments with a view to limiting the capacity of terrorists to use the Internet for their terrorist purposes.

Thirdly, pertaining to the desired international cooperation, the State of Kuwait would like to underscore the importance of international cooperation to address the threat posed by terrorist fighters, including in the following areas: exchanging information, border security, improving protection, dealing with the circumstances that lead to the spread of terrorism and preventing incitement to terrorist acts. We must also limit the financial support that is available to terrorist fighters, conduct and implement threat assessments of terrorist fighters, and in addition to all that make efforts to undertake judicial prosecutions, rehabilitation and reintegration, in line with international law.

We also encourage bolstering international cooperation between States and international organizations such as INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, with a view to exchanging information and expertise and implementing joint counter-terrorism programmes. Moreover, we encourage Member States to take advantage of relevant programmes being offered by the United Nations and its specialized agencies and other relevant international organizations.

We underscore the need to hold accountable those responsible for committing terrorist acts and violations of human rights. In that regard, we support the Investigative Team that was established by the Security Council in resolution 2379 (2017) to support efforts aimed at holding Da'esh accountable for the crimes it perpetrated in Iraq.

In the context of the efforts made by the State of Kuwait as a member of the coalition to fight Da'esh at the international level, my country hosted a ministerial meeting for the international coalition against Da'esh on 13 February, in which 70 States and four international organizations participated to formulate strategies and plans to combat terrorism. It was the first meeting of its kind since Da'esh was defeated in Iraq.

The State of Kuwait condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations regardless of the motivations behind it. Terrorism constitutes a criminal act that is unjustifiable and must not be linked to any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnicity. Combating terrorism requires mobilizing all international efforts to confront that criminal scourge by adopting measures that guarantee respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance, as well as the peaceful coexistence of religions and respect for their symbols and sanctity, while dealing with the conditions that lead to the spread of terrorism, stopping incitement to hatred and rejecting all forms of extremism and violence.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Coninsx for their briefings. China also welcomes the report of Secretary-General Guterres (S/2018/770) on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to international peace and security. China also paid close attention to the statement made by Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence.

The recent successful terrorist attacks that took place in Afghanistan and Syria resulted in tremendous harm to the countries concerned. Terrorism is the common enemy of humankind and affects countries beyond their national borders. It is hard for any country to respond to it alone. Faced with such a challenge, and bound by a shared destiny, the international community should effectively implement a common, integrated, cooperative and sustainable security concept, effectively carry out the relevant Security Council resolutions and strengthen cooperation to jointly respond to the threat of terrorism in the light of its new trend and characteristics.

First, with respect to further building international consensus on counter-terrorism, the international community should adhere to a unified standard and adopt a zero-tolerance and non-discriminatory stance in resolutely combating terrorists, regardless of location, pretext, targeted countries or the means used. In fighting terrorists at the international level, we should respect the sovereignty of the countries in question, as well as the main responsibility of the countries concerned to fight terrorism and abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and allow the United Nations, including the Security Council, to play its leading role.

Secondly, we must make joint efforts to address the root causes of terrorism. The international community should push for a political settlement of regional issues, assist Member States in achieving their economic and

social development and poverty reduction and alleviation goals, refrain from linking terrorism to specific ethnic or religious groups and promote dialogue on an equal footing among civilizations and religions with a view to fostering harmonious coexistence and endeavouring to build a new type of international relations.

Thirdly, with regard to disrupting the terrorist network of cross-border movement, terrorist organizations have recently suffered heavy losses in Iraq and Syria. However, terrorist fighters' movements and returns still pose a serious threat to the security and stability of countries of origin, transit and destination. The countries concerned should strengthen cross-border control and law enforcement cooperation, share intelligence resources and strengthen capacities to jointly detect the flow of terrorist fighters.

Fourthly, we must fight terrorist activities conducted by terrorist organizations through the Internet. Cyberspace and social media have become an important means for terrorist organizations to incite [illegible] recruit fighters and plan attacks. The international community should strengthen regulations on the Internet and block terrorist organizations from using the Internet to spread extremist ideologies and conduct terrorist financing. The United Nations counter-terrorism bodies should strengthen coordination and help the broader developing membership to strengthen counter-terrorism capacity-building in cyberspace.

China is an important member in the international fight against terrorism. In recent years, China has been deeply involved in the work of multilateral cooperation mechanisms, such as the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, actively taken part in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy review and the high-level meeting of Member States against terrorism and assisted Members in their counter-terrorism capacity-building through the China-United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund, thereby making an important contribution to the international fight against terrorism.

China will continue participate in and promote multilateral and bilateral counter-terrorism cooperation and provide assistance to developing countries in terms of counter-terrorism measures and capacity-building. China wants to work together with all countries to jointly address the threat of terrorism and violent extremism in safeguarding world peace and stability.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, Executive Director Michèle Coninsx and Ms. Joana Cook for their informative briefings. Let me also express my gratitude to the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism for the seventh report (S/2018/770) of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat.

The efforts of those bodies in providing strategic-level reporting and the increasing cooperation among them with other stakeholders are most appreciated. While acknowledging that the authorities of United Nations Member States bear the primary responsibility to stand up to the evolving threat posed by terrorists, we should encourage, support and commend the engagement of international, religious and civil society organizations, as well as academia and the private sector. Moreover, the fight against terrorists must be carried out in accordance with international human rights standards. In the long run, it requires also addressing the root causes of terrorism, including poor development perspectives and human rights situations. Let me focus on four issues of the utmost importance in countering Da'esh.

First, with regard to preventing attacks by Da'esh and the spread of its network, although ISIL might have lost control of territories in Iraq and Syria, it remains a threat in both States and beyond, including through foreign terrorist fighters, terrorist groups and the related relocation phenomenon. Efforts must be continued to stop the creation and expansion of Da'esh and affiliated cells in South-East Asia, Libya, Afghanistan, West Africa and other regions and countries. Their members' cowardly attacks, like the one in May in Indonesia, must be prevented. Enhancing border management and law enforcement is crucial in that regard. While recognizing efforts aimed at raising standards and strengthening cooperation within those areas, we call for their further development.

Secondly, concerning stopping the financing of terrorism, we have to step up efforts in cracking down on sources and flows of funding for ISIL, including businesses in which its members have reportedly invested. We should also identify and address the risk

of abusing new payment modalities for terrorism-financing purposes, in particular in countries in which they remain unregulated. Member States should strengthen their financial intelligence, use of counter-terrorism financing tools and fulfil their obligation to freeze the assets of all entities on the Da'esh and Al-Qaida sanctions list. The assistance of the United Nations and other relevant actors in that area is vital. We welcome efforts to that end and encourage their continuation.

Thirdly, with regard to ensuring accountability and non-recurrence, given the relocation of foreign fighters and their families, international judicial cooperation, as well as terrorist prosecution, rehabilitation and integration efforts, has to be redoubled. That requires stepping up the collection, analysis and sharing of data, including evidence, which should be conducted in compliance with human rights and the rule of law. It also requires the development of relevant partnerships and strategies, including for the post-release context of those convicted of terrorism within prison systems. The challenges associated with their return to society must be properly addressed. We welcome the relevant work that has been done in that area, including the initiative mentioned in the report, and support its development.

With regard to countering terrorist narratives and engaging communities, although I welcome the whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach to countering violent extremism adopted by United Nations entities, I would also like to emphasize the gender dimension. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by terrorists, and therefore adequate personnel and facilities need to be in place to provide tailored responses for female victims of terrorism, in accordance with resolution 2331 (2016). I agree with the report's observation that the full inclusion and empowerment of women are crucial to the success of programmes to prevent violent extremism and counter-terrorism. I encourage adopting measures promoting the systematic involvement of women and support for women's initiatives in that regard. The inclusion of religious leaders and young people is also crucial and should be encouraged.

In conclusion, let me assure you, Mr. President, that Poland, a member of the global coalition against Da'esh, will not stop in its efforts to combat ISIL's activities. We call on all others to do the same, and we remain ready to cooperate to that end.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank the United Kingdom presidency for convening this briefing. We welcome Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, whom we are honoured to see presiding over today's meeting. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, Head of the Office of Counter-Terrorism; Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED); and Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, for their insightful remarks. My delegation would like to make the following observations and recommendations.

We see a definite changing trend in the tactics related to terrorist acts in the world today, which can be described as low-cost, localized terrorism. The weakening of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has resulted in urging its supporters throughout the world into what can be described as autonomous jihad in their places of residence by using any means at their disposal during major social, political, sporting, religious and cultural events. We see an increase in the number of suicide attackers who use improvised explosive devices, vehicles and drones laden with explosives. Such tactics now widely prevail, thereby causing serious damage, exacerbated by the return and relocation of foreign terrorist fighters. The latter have acquired practical skills in conducting mine and explosive warfare and military operations in highly concentrated urban areas. Alarmingly, members of militants' families, especially women and children, are being used for the ill-intentioned ends of terrorists to spread radical ideology and facilitate, or even carry out, lethal terrorist acts.

As we heard today, Central Asia constitutes a potential target of terrorist activities. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/770), the greatest threat to the region comes from the largest terrorist groups in the north of Afghanistan, owing to the inflow of militants from Syria and Iraq with the aim of transferring terrorist activities to the region and beyond. Driven out of Iraq, they see Afghanistan as a springboard for the creation of a world Islamic caliphate — an expansion of the so-called Wilayat Khorasan, comprised of foreign terrorist fighters, former members of the Taliban, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and others. Therefore, international terrorist organizations will attempt to infiltrate and incite terrorist activity in Central Asia. That process

is facilitated by the dissemination of terrorist ideology to radicalize vulnerable segments of society in Central Asian countries, thereby leading to the spread of various unconventional religious movements in Islam the adherents of which are a recruiting base for replenishing the ranks of terrorists.

Furthermore, in the light of ISIL's weakened position, the authority of Al-Qaida and its regional branches is gradually growing, thereby creating another dangerous front in the fight against terrorism. In that context, Kazakhstan calls making every effort to consolidate international, regional and national counter-terrorism systems. Considerable attention should be paid to preventing the spread of terrorism and extremism, especially among young people, as a priority.

At the regional level, Kazakhstan actively carries out the Joint Plan of Action for the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia, by addressing all four of its pillars. The third phase of the regional Joint Plan of Action for implementing the Global Counter-Terrorsim Strategy in Central Asia was successfully launched by the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), the Office of Counter-Terrorism and CTED in May in Ashgabat. Kazakhstan was the first country to provide financial support for its activities. We thank other donor countries — first and foremost the Russian Federation — for their financial contributions. One of the first events in the framework of the Joint Plan was a regional workshop — on the theme "Addressing conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism and terrorism" — organized by the UNRCCA and the Office of Counter-Terrorism in Astana in May.

To address present-day challenges, Kazakhstan reiterates the steps it proposed at the High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held in New York in June: first, the adoption of the code of conduct to achieve a world free of terrorism, initiated by Kazakhstan, as a multilateral political commitment of the States Members of the United Nations to engage in a collective fight against terrorism through concerted efforts; second, placing under rigorous control, and eventually halting, drug trafficking, the illegal trade in natural resources and cultural artefacts and the use of new technologies and payment modalities, which are the main sources of financing terrorism; thirdly, sharing experiences and best practices among Members States to prevent all forms of terrorism, including countering the financing of terrorism and identifying terrorist threats in cyberspace, together with protecting critical infrastructure; fourthly, enhancing the sharing of biometric information on terrorists among regional and international databases in order to obtain timely information about groups and individuals with destructive intentions; fifthly, establishing an exchange of best practices on forensics and the suppression of terrorist ideas on the Internet — it is equally critical to counteract activities in cyberspace — sixth, taking proactive measures to counter self-radicalization and prevent the recruitment of citizens by extremist organizations; and, seventh, ensuring sustainable economic development to complement security efforts in order to provide a meaningful alternative for young people in particular.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Kazakhstan's support for the efforts of the Office of Counter-Terrorsim to establish a global network of national counter-terrorism coordinators under the auspices the United Nations, as proposed by the Secretary-General. We are committed to fully engaging in multilateral efforts to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): I would like to thank you, Mr. President., for convening today's important meeting. I would like to start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Executive Director Coninsx and Ms. Cook for their informative briefings. We are particularly pleased to see Ms. Cook here today, as the insights of research institutions and civil society organizations are extremely valuable to our understanding of how to best address the evolving threat of terrorism. I thank her for her presentation. Civil society is often best placed to identify the risks of radicalization, which, if not prevented, can lead to violent extremism and terrorism. The collaboration between the United Nations and civil society should therefore be further strengthened. In that regard, we appreciate Under-Secretary-General Voronkov's ongoing efforts to increase cooperation between the Office of Counter-Terrorism and civil society.

The links between terrorism and conflict are clear. Although the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant has been pushed back considerably, it remains locally embedded in a number of protracted conflicts — for example, in Afghanistan and Libya. Efforts to combat terrorism cannot therefore be viewed in isolation but

must be seen within our broader efforts to resolve and prevent conflicts and promote peace. To fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the sustaining peace agenda should be at the core of those efforts. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a longer-term endeavour, but remain the key to preventing violent extremism, which should be our first priority. The SDGs are relevant to that agenda in many aspects, not least by generating hope. Ensuring the sustainability of the financial system, as reflected in SDG 16, is directly related to countering the financing of terrorism, which is decisive in the fight against terrorism. My Minister of Justice took part in the No Money for Terror conference, held in Paris in April, and we have undertaken significant domestic reforms in that area. We stand ready to take part in efforts at all levels — global, regional and national — to further improve the system to cut off access to financing, through the collective efforts of the United Nations, the Financial Action Task Force and the European Union.

Ensuring accountability should be another essential part of our efforts to counter terrorism. We are concerned in particular about the continued failure to prosecute in cases of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual slavery, perpetrated by terrorist organizations. The perpetrators of such horrendous crimes must be held to account. It is not only important to deter further such acts, but also to ensure that justice is served for the countless number of victims of terrorism. We welcome the fact that Tuesday marked the first International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to Victims of Terrorism.

We are pleased to see increased attention to both the gender dimension and to children's rights in the fight against terrorism. Ms. Cook's briefing has reminded us that those issues deserve greater attention. For example, it is important that we develop rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that are tailored to children and gender-sensitive.

Let me take this opportunity to highlight some of our national counter-terrorism experiences that we think could serve as an inspiration to others.

Last year, our national coordinator against violent extremism presented a report on our efforts. A key finding in the report was that municipalities were in need of greater capacity and support to address the challenges of violent extremism at the local level. Therefore, the Swedish Centre for Preventing Violent Extremism was established to support the municipalities in their work to counter and prevent violent extremism — with knowledge, research and good examples. In addition, municipalities have now appointed local coordinators to help strengthen cooperation between local and national levels and access State funding for programmes to prevent extremism.

Another report on children's involvement in violent extremism, which was presented by the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden earlier this year, showed that there is a need to listen more to children's experiences to ensure their successful reintegration into society. As a result, social services have issued recommendations on how to deal with returnees and their families, which are now being implemented.

Although local, national and regional efforts are important, international cooperation also remains central if we are to be successful in our counter-terrorism efforts. The first-ever High-Level Conference for Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, which was successfully held at the end of June this year, was very useful in facilitating such cooperation. Some of the most valuable contributions during that Conference came from civil society representatives. That is why we stress the importance of having civil society present at future meetings, without limitations.

Let me conclude by reiterating that all measures against terrorism must be taken in compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law. Respect for human rights must never be ignored in the fight against terrorism.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would like to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninsx for their briefings on the seventh report (S/2018/770) of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat. We found the report very comprehensive and informative. We also thank the Secretary-General for making counter-terrorism one of his priorities. I would also like to thank Ms. Cook for her contribution.

As we have been discussing in the Security Council, military pressure has resulted in strategic setbacks for ISIL on the main battleground, and the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/770) rightly states

that, starting at the end of 2017, ISIL was defeated in Iraq and was in a headlong retreat in the Syrian Arab Republic. As a result, the flow of foreign terrorist fighters towards ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic has essentially come to a halt. That has obviously damaged its global propaganda machinery and slowed its sources of revenue. These points have also been rightly underlined by the briefers.

Nonetheless, we feel it is only wise not to go overboard and declare victory over terror. The threat posed by terrorism will continue to be a big challenge in the light of what is stated in the report and what we have just heard from the briefings. The report rightly states that the ongoing transformation of ISIL from a territorial entity to a covert network, the activities of its regional affiliates and the threat posed by returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters remain huge challenges.

Obviously, returnees and relocated fighters from the conflict zones to other regions now present a considerable threat to international security. These examples show that, although notable progress has been made in defeating ISIL on the battle field, significant challenges to countering existing threats persist. All of those challenges require the proper implementation of United Nations resolutions and, more important, collaboration and cooperation at all levels among States and non-State entities.

We also note from the report the ever-growing threat posed by ISIL and its affiliated fighters and sympathizers and foreign terrorist fighters in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Central and South Asia, and South-East Asia. In that context, the response of the United Nations, Member States and other stakeholders to the evolving threats in the areas of countering terrorist financing, ensuring border management and law enforcement, securing international judicial cooperation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration, countering terrorist narratives and engaging communities are all very important.

Africa remains highly affected by terrorism and violent extremism. We are seeing what is happening in North and West Africa, the Sahel region and East Africa, where ISIL and Al-Qaida affiliates and sympathizers continue to pose serious threats to peace and security. With regard to East Africa, Al-Shabaab, an Al-Qaida affiliate, remains a potent threat to peace and security in Somalia and the Horn of Africa. But we are also seeing the emergence of ISIL affiliates operating in Somalia that are controlled and directed from the central command in Puntland, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report. Reports by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development also reinforce those findings and provide useful insights.

ISIL in Libya remains a threat to the country and the wider region. Insecurity in the country creates safe havens for terrorists, which, in turn, affects neighbouring countries. According to the report, and despite the lack of concrete evidence, there is a possibility that terrorists in North Africa are directly involved in trafficking in drugs or persons. If proved true, this issue will indeed remain a huge concern. In West Africa, groups such as the Islamic State in Greater Sahara and Islamic State's West African Province, or Boko Haram, are active, while the threat posed by ISIL-related groups and Al-Qaida affiliates in the region continues to be a big challenge.

We would like to reiterate that restoring peace and stability in Libya, Mali and the Lake Chad basin is indeed critical to denying terrorist groups safe haven. Enhancing the capacity of countries members of the Group of Five for the Sahel and of the Lake Chad region will continue to be very important in countering terrorists operating in the wider region. That is also why it is so critical that we get the management of security right in Somalia as we embark upon the transition from the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia to Somali security forces.

The enormous challenge we face in the fight against terrorism should compel us to forge meaningful cooperation at all levels. The full implementation of existing international legal frameworks against ISIL and foreign terrorist fighters by all Member States is vital to strengthening international cooperation. In that regard, we would like to reiterate that developing countries will continue to face huge difficulties to properly implementing those legal frameworks because of limitations of capacity in various areas. Shortcomings that might be observed are not, by and large, the result of a lack of commitment but rather a lack of the required resources and technical and other related capacities — too many to recount here.

Therefore, in addition to forging the necessary cooperation at all levels, the delivery of capacity-building and technical assistance will be critical for the effective implementation of those legal frameworks.

We also agree on the need for enhanced coordination between the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, as well as among all relevant bodies mandated by the Security Council and the General Assembly in their efforts to support Member States in countering the threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to join others in congratulating Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate; and Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, for their informative briefings.

My delegation notes with deep concern that, despite the military and strategic setbacks they have suffered, Da'esh and its associated individuals, groups, businesses and entities continue to pose a serious threat to world peace and security. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the determination of the United Nations and its constant support to Member States to meet the persistent challenge of the fight against terrorism within the framework of a comprehensive and coordinated approach.

According to the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/770), many challenges remain, including the gradual transformation of Da'esh into a nexus of franchises, as well as the threat posed by the return and relocation of foreign terrorist fighters. In addition, Da'esh and its associated groups are using new information and communication technologies, which further complicate the fight against terrorist group financing, recruitment and propaganda activities. These new challenges force States to refine and coordinate their tools and responses to match the scale of the scourge.

My delegation notes with concern that the actions of Da'esh affect the entire world. In Africa, a significant number of combatants affiliated with Da'esh remain very active in Somalia, in the greater Sahel and in West and North Africa, notably in Egypt and Libya, where there are 3,000 to 4,000 foreign terrorist fighters. Terrorist groups continue their destabilization activities through increasingly sophisticated armed attacks. They also have expanded their control over smuggling routes and hamper the free movement of goods and people in affected areas. In Africa, for example, States already weakened by all manner of difficulties will be forced to allocate a significant part of their budgets to combating their enemies in asymmetrical wars that undermine their development efforts.

In view of that situation, Côte d'Ivoire urges solidarity and cooperation among all actors and advocates an improvement in national and regional counter-terrorism capacities. In that regard, we welcome the signing, on 23 February, of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Pact, a framework for cooperation among the heads of United Nations entities responsible for combating terrorism and preventing violent extremism. My country also welcomes the strengthening of cooperation between the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, through high-level bilateral consultations in the regions most affected by terrorism and violent extremism.

Such cooperation is essential and enables the follow-up of the evaluation visits in order to ensure that the technical assistance proposed meets the recommendations and targets the priority needs of each State. My delegation welcomes the unanimous adoption by the General Assembly, on 26 June, of resolution 72/284, on the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, with a view to defeating terrorism through cooperation.

Lastly, my country welcomed the conclusions of the first High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held on 28 and 29 June at Headquarters. The meeting provided a forum for exchanges on strengthening multilateral cooperation, including innovative public-private partnerships, so as to improve the sharing of sensitive information.

The fight against terrorism is undeniably a national and international security emergency. No matter how well developed, the security responses proposed by current counter-terrorism strategies will be truly effective only if they are bolstered by bold policies to combat poverty and youth unemployment, which are sources of radicalization and violent extremism. Côte d'Ivoire is therefore of the opinion that terrorist movements leave us no choice but to pool our means of fighting them, within the framework of coherent and coordinated strategies for the fight.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me first of all welcome the presence of Secretary of State Hunt and the manner in which he has been leading today's meeting, which has brought us together to address the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security. We are grateful he has convened this meeting owing to the importance of the issue.

I would also like to join previous speakers in thanking Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, and Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization, for their informative briefings on the threat posed by Da'esh.

The seventh report (S/2018/770) of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security, which we are discussing at today's meeting, confirms that, despite its diminished financial resources and although weakened at its core and less active, Da'esh remains a global threat with repercussions on all continents and subregions. The evolution of Da'esh from a proto-State structure into a covert and decentralized network is facilitated by its regional affiliates and its network of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters, including women and children, and by a new and deplorable phenomenon of suicide attacks involving the use of entire families.

It should be stressed that the partial defeats that Da'esh has suffered in both Iraq and Syria must not be allowed to mislead us. The growing presence in Africa of foreign terrorist fighters coming from the Middle East is helping to strengthen the resolve, strategies and financial means of their affiliates in North Africa, the Sahel and Sahara regions, the Lake Chad basin and East Africa. Its mobility will also affect the growing collaboration between it and its affiliates with other terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. In Africa in particular, these circumstances, together with unequal development among countries, poverty, the inequitable access to opportunities, especially for young people and women, the increased circulation of small arms and ammunition as a result of the crisis in Libya, and the existence of displaced persons, are the causes of growing complexity of protracted conflicts on the continent.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea applauds and encourages the various efforts being made to ensure better coordination of the United Nations system in the fight against terrorism, the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Pact, and the continued strengthening of collaboration between the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and among the Counter-Terrorism sanctions committees, inter alia. We also appreciate the efforts of Member States to counter terrorism to the best of their ability, and reiterate the obligation to respect national sovereignty, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, so as to prevent and neutralize the structural causes that led to the formation and expansion of Da'esh in Africa and the Middle East. In that regard, we would like to make three suggestions that we believe complement the ongoing global efforts against Da'esh and terrorism.

First, we believe that it is extremely important to eliminate safe havens and "black spots" in the fight against terrorism, in order to limit the movement of foreign terrorist fighters and the expansionist plans of Da'esh and its affiliates. It is critical to identify regions and States where, for whatever reason, the implementation of counter-terrorism resolutions is limited, which includes preventing violent extremism, establishing legal structures, protecting borders, including sea borders, and stopping the financing of terrorism, among other priorities. In that regard, we commend joint actions undertaken this year in Central Asia by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Office of Counter-Terrorism, and encourage similar efforts and research projects in Africa. We would also like to highlight the Arria Formula meeting that Equatorial Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, the United States, Ethiopia and the Netherlands, with the collaboration of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, organized in June on the subject of transnational organized crime at sea and how it is currently taking place in different parts of the world, which served to underscore how this phenomenon may, in some instances, represent a threat to regional and/or international peace and security.

Secondly, we believe it is crucial to recognize the need to invest in addressing the root causes of conflict, and therefore in sustainable and equitable development and peace. In that context, a powerful counter-narrative to the Da'esh narrative could be generated, especially

through, inter alia, the empowerment of women and youth, investment in education and the creation of labour markets. Accordingly, we welcome the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/72/840, on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which, thanks to its reaffirmation by consensus at the sixth review of the Global Strategy in June, will enable us to follow up on those activities and better understand their collective impact.

Thirdly, we believe that strengthening existing counter-terrorism partnerships, as well as coordination among them, is key. This is a challenge we can solve only if we are united and share information and experiences, thereby strengthening alliances and their effectiveness against Da'esh.

Equatorial Guinea is one of the main investors in the Central Office of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa, in which the Heads of African intelligence and security Services participate, which assists the African Union and all its institutions in matters of peace and security. We believe that the importance of that forum is crucial to fostering cooperation and brotherhood among countries against terrorist groups, including Da'esh. In that regard, we commend the success of the High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held last June, and call for similar events to be held in future. We also encourage support for the joint efforts of the African Union and the United Nations in the fight against Da'esh and terrorism in Africa.

Finally, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea reiterates the position of the African Union, which believes that terrorism and violent extremism represent one of the most dangerous threats to peace, security and sustainable development in Africa and the world. In that regard, we reaffirm our commitment to the fight against terrorism.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful for the convening of today's briefing. We thank Mr. Voronkov and Ms. Coninsx for their detailed analysis of the situation with regard to combating the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). We note the active efforts of the bodies that they head in preparing the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the issue (S/2018/770). We listened with interest to the briefing by Ms. Cook.

Amid the military and territorial losses, the destruction of the economic infrastructure, the weakening of the propaganda machine and the demoralization of the fighters, the group's leadership seeks any opportunity to maintain its influence. The global terrorist Tower of Babel has collapsed. However, ISIS cells continue to speak with one voice and to successfully coordinate among themselves. Following the destruction of the hydrocarbon smuggling network, terrorists have turned to new sources of financial and logistical support.

There have been reported incidents of speculation on stock markets, and the terrorists strive to invest funds in the legal sectors of the economies of a wide range of countries. The supporters of ISIS actively invest in tourism, hospitality, industry, agriculture, fish farms, pharmacology and construction companies. The group also continues to fight for control of drug-smuggling routes, including in Afghanistan. Furthermore, ISIS continues to receive funds from foreign sponsors cooperating under the cover of philanthropic foundations, religious groups and other non-governmental organizations.

We note with satisfaction that the starting point of the report presented today was an acknowledgement of the success of the Syrian army in combating terrorism. That was evident in the intense fight against ISIS in the suburbs of Damascus. At the same time, there has been progress far beyond the boundaries of the Syrian capital. With the support of the Russian armed forces, more than 1,400 towns and cities have been liberated from the presence of terrorists. More than 96 per cent of the Syrian territory has now been brought under the control of Government forces and the people's militia units. As a result, more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees have already been able to return to their homes. At the same time, we do not overlook the possibility of an increasing number of terrorist sleeper cells in Syria. The supporters of ISIS are doing their utmost. They actively recruit minors, including children under the age of 12 years, to carry out terrorist attacks. It is entirely possible that terrorist attacks will become more frequent, in particular in the area of Idlib. Furthermore, there is an increasing likelihood of the threat of ISIS in Afghanistan, where, according to various reports, there are 4,000 to 10,000 active members of that group, a significant number of whom are in the areas bordering the Central Asian States.

In parallel with the military defeat of ISIS, it is necessary to most effectively address the issue of holding radical elements to account. In that context, it behoves us to raise the issue of the inadmissibility of attempts to supplant the functions of Syrian Government's counter-terrorism bodies. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, in parallel with Government forces, arrests of ISIS members are also being carried out by certain armed entities. We would like to receive more detailed information. Who specifically is undertaking such tasks and on what basis? What is the fate of the detainees? Are there plans to hand them over to the authorities? We trust that we will receive answers from the specialized Security Council committees without having to await the issuance of the next report.

I would reiterate that, ultimately, all those who provide direct or indirect assistance to terrorists, not to mention the fighters themselves, must be held to account. However, the collection, processing and transfer of evidence to judicial bodies must be done strictly in accordance with international law and with full respect for the sovereignty of the States where ISIS perpetrated the crimes. If that factor is not taken into account, not a single initiative to investigate terrorist crimes can claim to be legitimate. For our part, Russian investigative bodies actively participate in such efforts on Syrian soil with the consent of, and in cooperation with, Damascus officials.

During the discussion of the sixth report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/80) in February (see S/PV.8178), the Russian delegation drew attention to the blatant breach of the arms embargo with regard to ISIS. What remains unresolved is the question of how that gang of thugs put together an arsenal of weapons, which for seven years has enabled it essentially to resist the world's largest armies. The current report depicts the situation as if the ISIS fighters are content with merely what happens to come their way, robbing storage sites in the territories under their control and manufacturing improvised explosive devices. In reality, those terrorists are able to manufacture only a small proportion of the weapons using an improvised method and only their most primitive models. There is increasing evidence of arms being provided from abroad, including through semi-legal structures or even with the support of the intelligence services of certain countries. We trust that there will be a detailed discussion on ways to address that issue during the international conference on countering illegal arms supplies in the context of combating international terrorism, to be held in Moscow on 3 and 4 September.

ISIS activity has decreased, which has enabled Al-Qaida to appear once again, with financing to the tune of $20 million to $40 million a month. That group is strengthening its ties with affiliated groups in North Africa. It strives to take control of local criminal businesses and to invest in the agro-industrial holdings of African countries. According to available reports, as ISIS is displaced Al-Qaida and its allies may take on the role of countering international efforts to peacefully resolve the conflict in Syria.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that the only way to eliminate the threat posed by ISIS, Al-Qaida and affiliated groups is on a genuinely collective basis. In that regard, we are studying with interest the initiative by the Secretariat leadership to set up a network of counter-terrorist coordinators. We are convinced that strengthening the practical cooperation of the specialized agencies of Member States represents an important factor in establishing a single United Nations-led counter-terrorism coalition on a non-ideological basis, which is something for which we have long called.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.